

E 458

.3

.W36

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00006145127





LOYAL PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
863 BROADWAY.

No. 11.

NO FAILURE FOR THE NORTH.

From the "Atlantic Monthly."

We have reached a point in the history of our national troubles where it seems desirable to examine our present position, and to consider whether we ought to surrender ourselves to despair, or congratulate ourselves on decided success—whether we should abandon all attempts to restore the Union, assert the dignity of the Constitution, and punish treason, or nerve ourselves to new effort, and determine to persevere in a righteous cause so long as a single able-bodied man remains, or a dollar of available property is unexpended.

It may be, it must be, conceded that we commenced the contest with very crude and inadequate notions of what war really is. We proposed to decide the issue by appealing to the census and the tax-list—tribunals naturally enough occurring to a mercantile and manufacturing community—but how if the enemy prefer cannon and cold steel? Our first campaign was in the field of statistics, and we found the results highly satisfactory. Our great numerical superiority, aided by our immense material resources, gave us an early and an easy victory. We outnumbered the enemy everywhere, defeated them in every pitched battle, starved them by a vigilant blockade, secured meanwhile the sympathy and support of the whole civilized world by the holiness of our cause, and commanded its respect by the display of our material power and our military capacity—and in a few short months crushed the rebellion, restored the Union, vindicated the Constitution, hung the arch-traitors, and saw peace in all our borders. This was our campaign—on

paper. But war is something more than a sum in arithmetic. A campaign cannot be decided by the rule of three. No finite power can control every contingency, and have all the chances in its favor.

War means alternate success and defeat, alternate hope and disappointment, great suffering in the field, many vacant chairs at many firesides, immense expenditures with little apparent result, "the best-laid schemes foiled by a thousand unexpected contingencies, lamentable indecision in the cabinet, glaring blunders in the field, stagnation of industry, and heavy taxation.

"War is a game, which, were the nations wise,
Kings would not play at."

But nations are not always wise, and war often becomes a necessity. When, then, the necessity arises, it should be met manfully. The question once deliberately decided that peace is no longer consistent with national honor or national safety, the dread alternative must be accepted with all its hazards and all its horrors. To organize only in anticipation of certain and speedy success, to despise and underrate the enemy, to inquire with how small an army and how limited an expenditure the war can be carried on, is as unstatesmanlike as it is in flat defiance of all historical teaching. But if we carry our folly still farther in the same direction; if we fail to take into grave account the most obvious and inevitable incidents of actual warfare; if in our overweening confidence we neglect discipline, underrate the prime importance of promptness and decision in action, certainty and celerity in movement, and energy and activity in pursuit; if, in a word, we expect that the defences of the enemy are to fall into our hands by means as unwarlike as those that decided the fate of Jericho, or dream that because our cause is just every precedent in history, and every principle in human nature will be overruled in our favor—then we deserve to be outgeneralled, and are fortunate, if we escape final and disastrous defeat.

Now, has not this been precisely our cardinal and capital error, and are we not to-day suffering its natural consequences? To the blind and unreasoning confidence with which we began this war has succeeded a reaction running into the very opposite

6. 5. 17 20 4 12
 extreme. We are given over to a despondency quite as unwarrantable as the extravagance of our early hopes. We demanded and expected impossibilities. Forgetting that the age of miracles has passed, many are now bitterly complaining that nothing has been accomplished, and predicting that all future efforts will terminate in similar failure. Two years have not elapsed since the first gun was fired at Fort Sumter; and yet we are amazed and mortified that our forces have not overrun the whole South, that victory has not crowned our arms in every battle, and that our flag does not float triumphant over every acre of every State once called Confederate. Whether this most desirable result could have been accomplished, if this or that policy had been adopted at the outset, is one of those problems that will never be solved; nor is the inquiry at present pertinent or profitable. Let us rather ask whether, in view of the means actually employed, our discontent with the existing condition of affairs is not unmanly and unreasonable. We are to measure results, not by the efforts that we ought to have put forth, nor by those which we should put forth, if, with our dear-bought experience, we were called upon once more to undertake such a gigantic enterprise. We must recall the aspect of affairs when we first embarked on this perilous sea. We must remember how ignorant we were of all the danger before us, how imperfect was the chart by which our course was to be determined, how many shoals and sunken rocks and cross-currents we were to encounter, as yet unknown to any pilot on board our noble ship of state, how little we knew of navigation in such angry waters, under so stormy a sky.

Turn back the pages of history for two short years, and dwell a moment on the picture presented to our eyes. A nation, enjoying to the utmost the substantial benefits belonging to fifty years of profound peace and unexampled prosperity, enervated by those habits of luxury which wealth easily accumulated always fosters, with a standing army hardly large enough to protect our Western frontier from the incursions of hostile Indians, and a navy ludicrously small in proportion to the extent of our sea-coast and the value of our commerce, is suddenly plunged into a war covering such an extent of territory, and calling for such an array of power by sea and land as to dwarf

into insignificance all modern wars, hardly excepting the military operations of Napoleon I.

And it must be remembered that education and habit had trained us to an implicit reliance on the sufficiency of our laws and the competency of our Constitution to meet and decide every issue that could possibly be presented. We could conceive of no public wrongs which could not be redressed by an appeal to the ballot-box, and of no private injuries for which our statutes did not provide a suitable remedy.

We were not only a law-abiding, but a peace-loving people. The report of the revolver was not heard in our streets, nor was the glitter of the bowie-knife seen in our bar-room. We deprecated mob-violence, and disliked the summary proceedings of Judge Lynch. We took no pains to conceal our horror of unnecessary bloodshed, and shared the views of civilized Christendom about duelling. We still clung to our plebeian prejudices against lawless violence, and persisted in believing that a swaggering bully could not be an ornament to cultivated and refined society. In fact, some excellent individuals at the North went so far as to seek to disseminate these old-fashioned notions among their Southern brethren, and made annual subscriptions to what was known (alas, that we must use the historic tense!) as the "Southern Aid Society," having for its praiseworthy object the support of ministers who should preach the gospel to our ardent and impulsive neighbors. What a sad and significant commentary is it upon the ingratitude of depraved human nature, that the condescending clergyman who whilom consented to collect the offerings of these discriminating philanthropists is now a chaplain in the Confederate army, and is invoking the most signal judgments of Heaven upon his former friends and fellow-laborers!

This, then, was our condition, and these were our habits, when we were rudely awakened from our dreams of peace by the roar of cannon and the clash of arms. What wonder that the startling summons found us all unready for such a crisis? What wonder that our early preparations to confront the issue thus forced upon us without note of warning were hasty, incomplete, and quite inadequate to the emergency? Is it discreditable to us that we were slow to appreciate the bitterness and intensity of

that hatred, which, long smouldering under the surface of Southern society, burst forth at once into a wide-spread conflagration, severing like flax all the ties of kindred, and all the bonds of individual friendship and national intercourse which had united us for half a century? Here was a section of our Union which had always enjoyed equal rights with us under the Constitution, and had known the Government only by its blessings,—nay, more, had actually, by the confession of its own statesmen, controlled the internal administration and dictated the foreign policy of the country since the adoption of the Constitution; which had no substantial grievance to complain of, and no fanciful injury which could not be readily redressed by legal and constitutional methods. Are we to be blamed because we could not easily bring ourselves to believe that an integral part of our nation, with such a history, could, under a pretence so bald as to insult the common sense of Christendom, rush head-long into a war which must close all its avenues of commerce, paralyze all its industry, threaten the existence of its cherished and peculiar institution,—in a word, whether successful or unsuccessful, inevitably result in its political suicide? At this very moment, accustomed as we have been for many sad and weary months to the daily development of Southern folly and madness, it is difficult, when we withdraw our minds from the present, to realize that the whole war is not a hideous nightmare.

In view of all this, I ask, is it strange that we did not at once comprehend all our danger, and did not enter the field with all our forces,—determined to fight with desperate energy until every trace of rebellion was crushed out? If, disturbed at midnight by footsteps in your chamber, you start up from sound slumber to see a truculent-looking vagabond prowling about your room with a lighted candle, do you not at once spring to your feet, collar the intruder, and shout lustily for help, if he prove too strong for you? Prompt and vigorous action in such a case is simply the impulse of instinct. But how if you recognize in the untimely visitor a member of your own household? Will you seize and overpower him without asking a single question, or waiting for a word of explanation? Will you not pause for some overt act of hostility, some convincing proof of a fell

purpose? Suppose it transpire that he really means mischief, and you lose an important advantage by your delay to strike. You may regret the result; but does it in the least tend to show that you were cowardly or careless? Now, was not this our exact dilemma? Although the origin of the war and the circumstances attendant upon its commencement are a thrice-told tale, are we not in danger of overlooking their bearing upon all our subsequent action? And shall we not act wisely, if we recur to them again and again, during this momentous contest?

But, asks a timid Conservative,—from whose patient button the fingers of an ardent apostle of peace have recently and most reluctantly parted,—has not this war been shamefully mismanaged by the Administration? have not contractors grown rich while soldiers have suffered? have not incompetent generals been unjustly advanced, and skillful commanders been summarily shelved? have we gained any advantages at all commensurate with our loss of blood and our expenditure of money? would not a cessation of hostilities on any terms be better than such a war as we are now waging? If we might venture to suggest a word of caution to our desponding friend, before attempting a reply to his broadside of questions, we would say: Beware how you indulge in too much conversation with a certain class of our citizens, whose hearty loyalty has been more than doubted, and whose conversion to the beauties of peace and the horrors of war is so sudden as to be very suspicious. Examine their antecedents, and you will find, that, when “border ruffians” in Kansas threatened with fire and sword the inoffensive emigrants from New England, these gentlemen saw nothing unusual in such proceedings, and answered all remonstrances with ridicule. Put them to the question to-day, and it will appear, that, from the very beginning of the struggle, all their sympathies have been with the South. They will tell you that Northern Abolitionists are alone responsible for the war; that the secession of the Southern States may have been unwise, but was not unreasonable; that they have always condemned coercion and advocated compromise; and that there is no safe and satisfactory way out of our existing difficulties but—*peace*. What do they mean by peace? Such peace as the highwayman, armed to the

teeth, offers to the belated traveller! Such peace as Benedict Arnold sought to negotiate with the English general! They know that the South will accept no terms but the acknowledgment of her independence, or the abject and unconditional submission of the Free States. They reject the first alternative, because they dare not go before the North on such an issue. Disguise it as they may, they are willing to adopt the second. The party to which, without an exception, these men belong, is powerless without the co-operation of the South, and would consider no sacrifice of principle too great, and no humiliation of the North too degrading, if it promised the restoration of their political supremacy. Avoid all such men. Distrust their advice. That way dishonor lies, and national disgrace. If you are not "armed so strong in honesty" as to be proof against such treasonable talk, you will soon be aware of a softening of your backbone, and a lamentable loss of earnest, active patriotism. Take counsel rather of your own common sense. Looking at the question in its narrowest and most selfish bearings, you *know* that we can neither recede nor stand still. Submission is slavery. Disunion paves the way for endless secession, and eternal warfare between rising and rival republics.

But there are other symptoms of disloyalty besides this persistent demand for peace. There are indications of a desire to array sections of the North against each other, and—Heaven save the mark!—by the very politicians who have been most bitter in their denunciation of "geographical parties." Here comes a little Western lawyer, with unlimited resources of slang and slender capital of ideas, barely redeemed from being an absolute blackguard by the humanizing influences of a New England college, but showing fewer and fewer symptoms of civilization as he forgets the lessons of his collegiate life; and *he* delights an audience of New York "roughs" by the novel information, that "Puritanism is a reptile" and the cause of all our troubles, and that we shall never fulfil our national destiny until Puritanism has been crushed. Let us not elevate this nauseating nonsense into importance by attempting a reply. Such men must be left to follow out their inevitable instincts. They are not worth the trouble necessary to civilize them. Mr. Rarey succeeded in taming a zebra from the London Zoölogical

Gardens; but a single lesson could not permanently reclaim the beast, and it soon relapsed into its native and normal ferocity. One experiment sufficed to show the power of the artist; no possible increase of value in the educated animal would have justified a prolonged and perfect training.

You ask if we have gained any advantages commensurate with our efforts, or with the high-sounding phrase of our declared purpose. Let us look at this a moment. Suppose we begin with a glance at the other side of the picture. Has all the boasting, have all the promises, been on the Federal side? Did we hear nothing of the Confederate flag floating over Faneuil Hall?—nothing of Washington falling into the hands of the enemy?—nothing of a festive winter in Philadelphia, and a general distribution of spoils in New York?—nothing of foreign intervention?—nothing of the cowardice of Northern Mudsills, and the omnipotence of King Cotton? Decidedly, the rebels began with a sufficiently startling programme. Let us see how far they have carried it out. As they were clearly the assailants, we have an undoubted right to ask what they have accomplished *aggressively*. We say, then, that, excepting in the case of one brief raid, the soil of a single Free State has never been polluted by the hostile tread of an invading force; that every battle-field has been within the limits of States claimed as Confederate; that while the war has desolated whole States represented in the Confederate Congress, not an acre north of Mason and Dixon's line has suffered from the ravages of the rebel armies. Was ever another scorpion more completely surrounded and shut in by a cordon of fire?

This is surely something, but it is by no means all. Have *we* accomplished nothing aggressively? We will call into court a witness from the enemy's camp. Hear the recent testimony of a leading journal, published in the Confederate capital:*

"It is not altogether an empty boast on the part of the Yankees, that they hold all that they have ever held, and that another year or two of such progress as they have already made will find them masters of the Southern Confederacy. They who think independence is to be achieved by brilliant but inconsequential victories, would do well to look at the magni-

* *Richmond Examiner*, January 20th, 1863.

tude of Yankee possessions in our country. Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri are claimed as constituent parts of the Confederation: they are as much in the power of Lincoln as Maine and Minnesota. The pledge once deemed foolish by the South, that he would 'hold, occupy, and possess' all the forts belonging to the United States Government, has been redeemed almost to the letter by Lincoln. Forts Pickens [Sumter?] and Morgan we still retain; but with these exceptions, all the strongholds on the seaboard, from Fortress Monroe to the Rio Grande, are in the hands of the enemy. Very consoling and very easy to say that it was impossible to prevent all this, and that the occupation of the outer edge of the Republic amounts to nothing. Drury's Bluff and Vicksburg give the lie to the first assertion; and the onward movement of Rosecrans towards Alabama, the presence of Grant in North Mississippi and of Curtis in Middle Arkansas, to say nothing of Banks at New Orleans and Baton Rouge, set at rest the silly dream that a thin strip of sea-coast only is in possession of our foes. The truth is, the Yankees are in great force in the very heart of the Confederacy; they swarm on all our borders; they threaten every important city yet belonging to us; and nearly two hundred thousand of them are within two days' march of the Confederate capital. This is no fiction. It is a fact so positive that no one can deny it."

But this reluctant recital by no means exhausts the record of our success. We have put into the field a volunteer force, fully armed and equipped, which, whether we consider its magnitude, the rapidity with which it has been raised, its fighting qualities, its patient endurance of unaccustomed hardships, or its intelligent appreciation of the principles involved in the contest, is without a counterpart in history. And yet more, from the invention and achievements of our iron-clads dates a new era in naval warfare, while in the value and variety of our ordnance we have taken the lead of all civilized nations. Can you find in all this nothing to quicken the pulse of your patriotism? Is here no ground for encouragement, no incitement to renewed effort?

But you complain of corruption among contractors, and of knavery among politicians. Will you point me to a single

war, ever waged on the face of the earth, where all the rulers were above reproach and all their subordinates unselfish? But what will you do about it? Grant that many contractors have made dishonest fortunes out of the calamities of their country, and that there are office-holders with whom "Stand by the Constitution?" means, Stand by the public crib from which we are richly and regularly fed, and "Uphold the Administration!" should be translated, Give us our full four years' enjoyment of the loaves and fishes. What then? Shall a few worthless straws here, and a few heaps of offal there, arrest or check the onward march of a mighty army, the steady progression of a great principle? Away with such trumpery considerations! Punish with the utmost severity of the law every public plunderer whose crimes can be dragged into the light of day; send to the Coventry of universal contempt every lagging and lukewarm official; but, in the name of all that is holy in purpose and noble in action, *move on!* To hesitate is worse than folly; to delay is more than madness. The salvation of our country trembles in the balance. The fate of free institutions for—who shall say how long?—may hang upon the issue of the struggle.

Your catalogue of grievances, however, is still incomplete. You are dissatisfied with our generalship as displayed in the field, and with the wisdom of our policy as developed by the cabinet. Unquestionably you have a constitutional right to grumble to your heart's content; but are you not aware that such complaints are as old as the history of the human race? Do you believe this to be the first war that was ever mismanaged, and that our undoubted blunders are either novel or peculiar to Republics? There never was a greater mistake. If there were brave men before Agamemnon, and wise counsellors before Ulysses, there certainly have been incompetent commanders before Mager-General A., and shallow statesmen before Secretary B. We do not monopolize executive imbecility, nor are our military blunders without parallel or precedent. To attribute our occasional reverses, and our indecisive victories, our inaction in the field and our confusion in the cabinet, to our peculiar form of government, is as inconsequential as it would be to trace all our disasters to the color of President Lincoln's hair or the number of General Halleck's children.

The enemies of free institutions, hardly yet recovered from their astonishment at beholding an army of volunteers, superior in number and quality to any the world ever saw, spring into existence with such marvellous rapidity as to eclipse, in sober fact, the fabulous birth of Minerva full-armed from the head of Jove, or their still greater surprise at seeing the immense expenses of so gigantic a ~~war~~ readily met without assistance from abroad, by large loans cheerfully made and heavy taxation patiently borne, are reduced to the necessity of exulting over what they term our "total want of military genius," and our "incapacity to conduct a campaign successfully."

It is useless to deny that we may have challenged criticism and provoked a smile by our large promise and our smaller performance. But are we the sole and exclusive proprietors of this experience? Where in the past or the present shall we find a great and powerful nation much addicted to modesty or self-depreciation? Least of all, should we have expected such venomous criticism and such unsparing ridicule from England. To be sure, we have long since ceased to look for sympathy or even justice at her hands. We have come to understand and appreciate the tone and temper of her ruling classes towards this country. In addition to their inherited antipathy to Republics, they believe in sober earnest what one of their greatest wits said jocosely, that "the great object for which the Anglo-Saxon race appears to have been created is the making of calico." And whatever interferes, or threatens to interfere, with this ennobling occupation is sure to incur their passive displeasure, if not their active hostility. We expect nothing, therefore, from their good-will; but we have a right to demand, as a matter of good taste, that, in criticizing our campaigns, they shall not wholly ignore their own military blunders, especially those so recent as to be fresh in the recollection of every third-form school-boy in the kingdom. For, if campaigns carried on with the smallest possible result in proportion to the magnitude of the sacrifice of money and life—if a succession of incompetent generals in command—if critical military opportunities neglected and enormous strategic blunders committed—if indecision, nepotism, and red tape at home, envy, want of unity, and incapacity among officers, and unnecessary and inexcusable hardship

among the privates—if all this declares the decadence of a Government, then was the sun of England hastening to its setting during the Crimean War.

We hear much said abroad about our indecisive battles, our barren victories, our failure to take advantage of the crippled condition of a defeated enemy, and our unaccountable disinclination to follow up a successful attack by a prompt pursuit. Now, not for the sake of excusing or palliating the numerous and grave errors into which we have fallen during our own unhappy struggle, nor yet to exonerate from censure any civil officers or military leaders who may be wholly or in part responsible for these errors, but simply to demonstrate that they are liable to occur under any form of government, and, indeed, have recently befallen the very government whose rulers now hold us to the strictest account, and are most eager to convict us of extraordinary misconduct and incapacity, we propose, very briefly, and without further introduction, to examine the record of the English army during the Crimean War.

The first important battle fought on the Peninsula was that of the Alma. We will give, as consisely as possible, so much of the history of this engagement, compiled from authentic English sources, as will present a correct picture of the plans formed and the results accomplished.

“The 15th of August, 1854, was the first date fixed for the sailing of the allied forces from Varna to the Crimea. It was postponed until the 20th, then till the 22d, then the 23th—then successively to the 1st, 2d, and 7th of September; that is, the French fleet left Varna on the 5th, and the English sailed from the neighboring port of Baltschick on the 7th.” It is admitted that “these delays hazarded not only the success, but even the practicability of the whole design, as between the 15th and 25th of September the great equinoctial gales sweep over the Black Sea, and lash into tempests of the most destructive nature.”

The voyage, however, was accomplished in safety, and on the 14th of September the Allies arrived at the Crimea, off a place called the “Old Fort,” only about thirty miles north of Sabastopol. The whole army was composed of 27,000 English, 24,000 French, and 8,000 Turks. The landing occupied the 14th, 15th, and 16th of September. At nine o’clock A. M.,

of September 19th, the army began the advance, and on the evening of the same day rested for the night within sight of the Russian forces, strongly intrenched on the banks of the Alma, about twelve miles distant from the "Old Fort." Early in the afternoon of the following day the Allies attacked the stronghold of the enemy, and in less than three hours the Russian intrenchments were successfully stormed, and the Russian army was in full retreat. The English and French troops fought with determined and distinguished bravery, and their victory was complete. But what was decided by this bloody struggle? Bad generalship on the part of the Russians, certainly; but what else? Mr. Russell says,—“This great battle was not decisive, so far as the fate of Sebastopol was concerned, merely because we lacked either the means or the military genius to make it so.” The victory was not followed up, the retreating foe were not pursued, ample time was given to the enemy to reorganize and retrieve their losses, and the evening of the eventful 20th September found the allied forces no nearer the capture of Sebastopol than they were before the battle.

Did “the Alma” crown the allied generals with fresh and well-earned laurels? We appeal once more to Mr. Russell: “I may inquire, Was there any generalship shown by any of the allied generals at the Alma? We have Lord Raglan painted by one of his staff, trotting in front of his army, amid a shower of balls, ‘just as if he were riding down Rotten Row,’ with a kind nod for every one, and leaving his generals to fight it out as the best they could; riding across the stream through the French Riflemen, not knowing where he was going to, or where the enemy were, till fate led him to a little knoll, from which he saw some of the Russian guns on his flank; whereupon he sent an order to Turner’s battery for guns, and seemed surprised that they could not be dragged across a stream and up a hill which presented some difficulties to an unencumbered horseman; then cantering off to join the Guards just ere they made their charge, and finding it all over while he was in a hollow of the ground.” Lord Raglan, let it be remembered, was the Commander-in-Chief of the English forces. And again: “The Light Division was strangely handled. Sir George Brown, whose sight was so indifferent that he had to get one of his offi-

cers to lead his horse across the river, seemed not to know where his division was. . . . If the conduct of a campaign be a succession of errors, the Crimean expedition was certainly carried on *secundum artem*." Once more, on the same point, and quoting from the same authority: "All the Russian officers with whom I have conversed, all the testimony I have heard or read, coincide on these two points: first, that, if, on the 25th, we had moved to Bakschiserai in pursuit of the Russians, we should have found their army in a state of the most complete demoralization, and might have forced the great majority of them to surrender as prisoners of war, in a sort of *cul-de-sac*, from which but few could have escaped; secondly, that, had we advanced directly against Sebastopol, the town would have surrendered, after some slight show of resistance to save the honor of the officers." Certainly, such generalship as this did not promise very well for the results of the campaign.

Let us follow the movements of the Allies a little farther. On the morning of September 25th, the combined forces took up their line of march southward. On the 26th, they reached and occupied the town of Balaklava, about six miles distant from Sebastopol. On the 28th of the same month, Lord Raglan wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, then Secretary of War, "We are busily engaged in disembarking our siege-train and provisions, and we are most desirous of undertaking the attack of Sebastopol *without the loss of a day*." And yet it is not until October 10th, that the Allies commence digging their trenches before the town. Meanwhile the allied army was anxious and impatient. "When will the siege commence?" was the constant inquiry of the wearied and expectant troops. 'To-morrow,' was the usual response, 'most probably to-morrow.' But day after day came and went, and the Allies still rusted in inaction, while the Russians worked day and night at strengthening their defences." "The time dragged heavily on; still the Russians worked with incredible industry, and still the cannon of the Allies had not yet opened their thunders upon Sebastopol." On the 17th of October, twenty one days after the occupation of Balaklava, the allied forces commenced fire by land and sea on the stronghold of the enemy. The bombardment continued from half-past six A. M., until nightfall, but is conceded to

have been a complete and mortifying failure. From this time until the 5th of November, it will not be contended that any substantial advantage was gained by the invading forces, or that material progress was made towards the reduction of the Russian Gibraltar.

Then came the battle of Inkerman, a gallant and desperate *sortie* of the Russians, bravely and successfully resisted by the besiegers. The loss of life on both sides was terrible. To what extent was *this* battle decisive? Mr. Russell shall give his own testimony on this point: "We had nothing to rejoice over, and almost everything to deplore, in the battle of Inkerman. We defeated the enemy, indeed, but had not advanced one step nearer the citadel of Sebastopol." In other words, the Allies had repulsed the Russians, but had barely escaped annihilation, while, from having been the besiegers, they became the besieged, and remained so until largely reinforced from home. "A heavy responsibility," says Mr. Russell, "rests on those whose neglect enabled the enemy to attack us where we were least prepared for it, and whose indifference led them to despise precautions which, taken in time, might have saved us many valuable lives, and have trebled the loss of the enemy." The English not only committed the serious error of underrating the enemy, and neglecting the most ordinary precautions against surprise, but, during the whole of the desperate and bloody fight, they gave no proof whatever of generalship. The stubborn, unyielding bravery of the troops was the salvation of the army. "We owed the victory, such as it was, to strength, not to superior intelligence and foresight. It was a soldiers' battle, in which we were saved by the muscle, nerve, and courage of our men." Humanity shudders and the heart sickens over the sufferings of that gallant army of martyrs to Cabinet incapacity and military imbecility during the long and dreary winter of 1854-55.

On the 9th of April, 1855, commenced the second grand bombardment of Sebastopol, which, though continuing for twelve days, resulted, like the first, in mortifying failure, no serious or irreparable injuries being caused to the main defences of the enemy. "The real strength of the place remained unimpaired. That which was injured during the day the Russians

repaired as if by magic during the night. The particulars of this twelve days' bombardment are wearisome. The same wasted energy, the same night skirmishes without effect, the same battering and repairing, the same unwearied exertions on the part of the Allies and wonderful endurance and resistance on the part of the Russians, together with, on each side, the same loss of life and frightful mutilations."

Two months were passed in comparative inaction, the sad monotony being varied only by ineffective sorties and indecisive skirmishes. On the 18th of June the first grand assault of the Malakoff and Redan was attempted. The allied troops displayed the utmost gallantry, and did all that brave men could do under disgracefully incompetent commanders, but were repulsed with horrible slaughter. No one can read the details of the fruitless massacre, without fully confirming the indignant testimony of an intelligent eye-witness, writing from the camp:

"I know not what may have been the feelings of your home public, on reading the telegraphic news of our defeat, (for I presume the scribes at headquarters made no attempt to conceal the naked truth, that our repulse was neither more or less than a defeat,) but here mingled shame and indignation were general throughout the camp. Officers and men alike felt that disgrace had been incurred, and that solely in consequence of the unredeemed mismanagement of their generals. Remembering the confusion which characterized the commencement of our movement, and coupling this with the murderous preparations made by the enemy, you will be at no loss to understand that success was most improbable. During the whole affair, Lord Raglan and Sir George Brown were ensconced within our eight-gun battery; but, though this afforded a good view of the scene of the struggle, and of the disorder which marked it, they appeared to be unable to give any efficient directions for the correction of our multiplied blunders. When the whole sad scene was ended, our men straggled back to the camp in a state of dispirited confusion, well in keeping with the mob-like disorder in which they had been throughout the assault."

The final bombardment of Sebastopol took place on the 5th of September, followed on the 8th by the renewed assault of the French on the Malakoff and of the English on the Redan. Skillful generalship, adequate forces,

and desperate bravery gave victory to the French, and "the key to Sebastopol" remained in their hands. Meanwhile the English assault upon the Redan was repulsed with frightful sacrifice of life. It will not be contended that the French owed any part of their success to superior good fortune. Indeed, all the extrinsic advantages were on the side of the English. The French were to lead off in the assault, and the tri-color waving over the captured fortification was to be the signal for the advance of the English. If the French succeeded, every sentiment of personal ambition and national pride would stimulate their allies to achieve an equal victory. If the French failed, the English had only to remain in their trenches.

Now let us examine the comparative generalship displayed in the two assaults. We are quite willing that English authority should draw the contrast. "The preparations of the French were actually scientific in their vigorous attention to every matter calculated to lead to victory; nothing appeared to have been forgotten, nothing neglected. Even the watches of the leading officers had been regulated, that there might not be the smallest error with regard to time. It is a painful reflection that this carefulness of preparation, and prescience with respect to probabilities, was not shown by the English general and his associates in arranging the mode of attack. When the orders were promulgated, on the 7th, many officers shook their heads doubtfully, and observed, in deprecating tones, 'This looks like another 18th of June.' It was generally observed that the attacking columns were not strong enough, that they were too far behind, and that the trenches did not afford room for a sufficient number of men."

The signal for the French assault was given; thirty thousand men, weary of long inactivity, and burning to add new lustre to the bright record of their country's military glory—drums and trumpets meanwhile sounding the charge, and the air resounding with shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur*"—darted from their trenches, swarmed up the embankments, dashed over the parapet, swept the enemy like chaff before them, and the Malakoff was won. Hours of the fiercest fighting found the French still masters of the situation; at nightfall the Russian

general sullenly drew off his defeated forces, and the victory was complete.

It is painful to turn from this brilliant picture to the sombre coloring and the dreary details of the attack on the Redan. To three thousand doomed men was assigned the perilous undertaking. Incredible as it may appear, in view of previous failure, there seems to have been no adequate preparation, no intelligible plan, no competent leader. It was simply brute force assailing brute force. The few men who actually entered the Redan neglected to spike the guns; no reinforcements came to their aid; everything was blind excitement, and headlong, undisciplined haste. "The men of the different regiments became mingled together in inextricable confusion. The Nineteenth men did not care for the officers of the Eighty-eighth, nor did the soldiers of the Twenty-third heed the command of an officer who did not belong to their regiment. The officers could not find their men—the men lost sight of their officers." But why dwell on what soon became mere butchery? The loss of the storming party, in killed, wounded, and missing, was 2,447!

Considered as a military movement, it would seem to be conceded that no grosser blunder could have been made than the selection of so small a force for so desperate an undertaking. There was no chance of success but by attacking simultaneously both flanks and the salient of the Redan. The storming party was barely large enough for the assault of the salient, thus exposing the handful of men to a murderous and fatally destructive fire from the flanks. This was bad enough, certainly, but worse remains behind. English critics have most severely censured our generals for sometimes placing new recruits in posts of danger, requiring cool heads, steady nerves, and the habits of discipline. Perhaps they have forgotten the following incident. Among the picked men selected out of the entire British forces as this very storming party, were raw recruits from the Ninety-seventh regiment, who were designated for this perilous service as a punishment for their cowardice in a recent skirmish!—and to make this punishment still more severe, they were ordered to *lead off* in the assault! An historian of the war says: "The inexperience of some of these recruits seems almost incredible.

One young fellow, who came to the field-hospital with a broken arm and a bullet in his shoulder, carried his firelock with him, but confessed that he had never fired it off, *as he was unable to do so*. The piece, upon being examined, was found to be in perfect order. Such poor, undisciplined lads, fresh from the plough, ought never on any occasion to have been pitted against the well-drilled soldiers of Russia; but it was something worse than blundering to lead them on to the assault of a formidable work like the Redan. Such generalship recalls to our mind the remark of the Russian officer with regard to the military force of England, that 'it was an army of lions led by donkeys.' Mr. Russell states that many of these recruits "had only been enlisted a few days, and had never fired a rifle in their lives."

Now, will it be believed that General Codrington, to whom was committed the planning and directing of this ill-starred and disastrous enterprise, succeeded Sir James Simpson as commander-in-chief of Her Majesty's forces in the Crimea? How must the shade of Admiral Byng have haunted Her Majesty's Government, unless it was a most forgiving ghost! If General Codrington's promotion could have been delayed a little more than eighteen months, it might have occurred appropriately on the centennial anniversary of the death of that ill-fated naval commander, convicted by court-martial and shot for "not doing his utmost!"

On the evening of the 8th of September, the Russians blew up their magazines, fired the buildings, and evacuated the town. So fell Sebastopol, after a siege of three hundred and forty-five days. It has been considered by the English a bit of very choice pleasantry to allude to our oft-recurring statement, that "the decisive blow had been struck," and that "the backbone of the Rebellion was broken." It may not be impertinent to remind them, that the report, first circulated in France and England in the latter part of September, 1854, and fortified by minute details, that Sebastopol—the backbone of Russian resistance to the allied arms—had fallen, was repeated and reiterated from time to time during the war, until the phrase, "*Sebastopol est pris*," passed into a by-word, and did good service in relieving the cruelly overworked Greek Kalends.

And now we come naturally to the consideration of another

and an important inquiry. Did the beginning of the war find, or did its progress develop or create, a single English general of commanding military capacity, competent to handle in the field even so small an army as the British contingent in the Crimea? Of Lord Raglan Mr. Russell says, and without doubt says truly: "That he was a great chief, or even a moderately able general, I have every reason to doubt, and I look in vain for any proof of it, whilst he commanded the English army in the Crimea." Another authority says: "The conviction that he was not a great general is universal and uncontradicted. He could perform the ordinary duties of a general satisfactorily, but he was lamentably deficient in those qualities which constitute military genius. He possessed considerable professional experience, great application, and remarkable powers of endurance; but he lacked the energy, vehemence, and decision of character which are essential to the constitution of a successful military chieftain." To his hesitation in council, and his want of energy and promptness in action, have always been attributed, in large measure, the ruinous delays and the fearful suffering in the army which he commanded. Lord Raglan died in June, 1855, in his sixty-seventh year. General Simpson succeeded him. "It was believed at the time," writes Mr. Russell, "and now is almost notorious, that he opposed his own appointment, and bore testimony to his own incapacity." "He was slow and cautious in council, and it is no wonder that where Lord Raglan failed, General Simpson did not meet with success." The English press and people demanded his recall. His incompetency was everywhere acknowledged, and indeed he himself would have been the last man to deny it. In about three months from the date of General Simpson's appointment, "the Queen was graciously pleased to permit him to resign the command of the army." As we have already seen, his place was filled by General Codrington. This officer was as signally rewarded, because he had failed, as he could have been, if he had succeeded. Mr. Russell quotes approvingly the comment of a French officer upon this appointment: "If General Codrington had taken the Redan, what more could you have done for him than to make him General, and to give him command of the army? But he did not take it, and he is made General

and Commander-in-Chief." With equal discrimination, Sir James Simpson was created Field-Marshal! The remainder of the campaign gave General Codrington no further opportunity of displaying his qualities for command. No other important action occurred before the termination of hostilities.

Great credit is certainly due to Mr. Russell for fearlessly exposing the errors and incompetency of the three officers successively at the head of the English army, in spite of "much obloquy, vituperation, and injustice," and for bearing his invariable and eloquent testimony to the bravery, endurance, and patience of the British private soldier.

In this brief recital of English blunders during the Crimean war, we have made no mention of the desperate and disastrous "charge of the light brigade," the gross and culpable inefficiency of the Baltic fleet under Admiral Sir Charles Napier, and other instances of military incapacity no less monstrous. Enough, however, has been told to more than justify the very mild summing-up of Mr. Russell, that the "war had exposed the weakness of our military organization in the grave emergencies of a winter campaign, and the canker of a long peace was unmistakably manifested in our desolated camps and decimated battalions."

Why should we add to this dismal recital the appalling suffering of the soldiers—helpless victims to bad management at home and shameful neglect in the field—the long, freezing nights of trench-work under a driving rain, "without warm or water-proof clothing—the trenches two and three feet deep with mud, snow, and half-frozen slush, so that many, when they took off their shoes, were unable to get their swollen feet into them again, and might be seen barefooted about the camp, the snow half a foot deep on the ground," creeping for shelter into "miserable tents pitched as it were at the bottom of a marsh, where twelve or fourteen unhappy creatures lay soaking without change of clothing," until they were called out again to their worse than slave labor—disease, brought on by exhaustion, exposure, overwork, and deficient food, sweeping the men off by thousands, and yet no sufficient supply of medical stores and no adequate number of medical attendants, not a soul seeming to care for their comfort or even for their lives—so neglected

and ill-treated that "the wretched beggar who wandered about the streets of London led the life of a prince compared with the British soldiers who were fighting for their country, and who were complacently assured by the home authorities that they were the best-appointed army in Europe." The world knows the whole sad story by heart. And is it not written in the volumes of evidence sworn to before the Commission appointed by Parliament to inquire into the condition of the army?

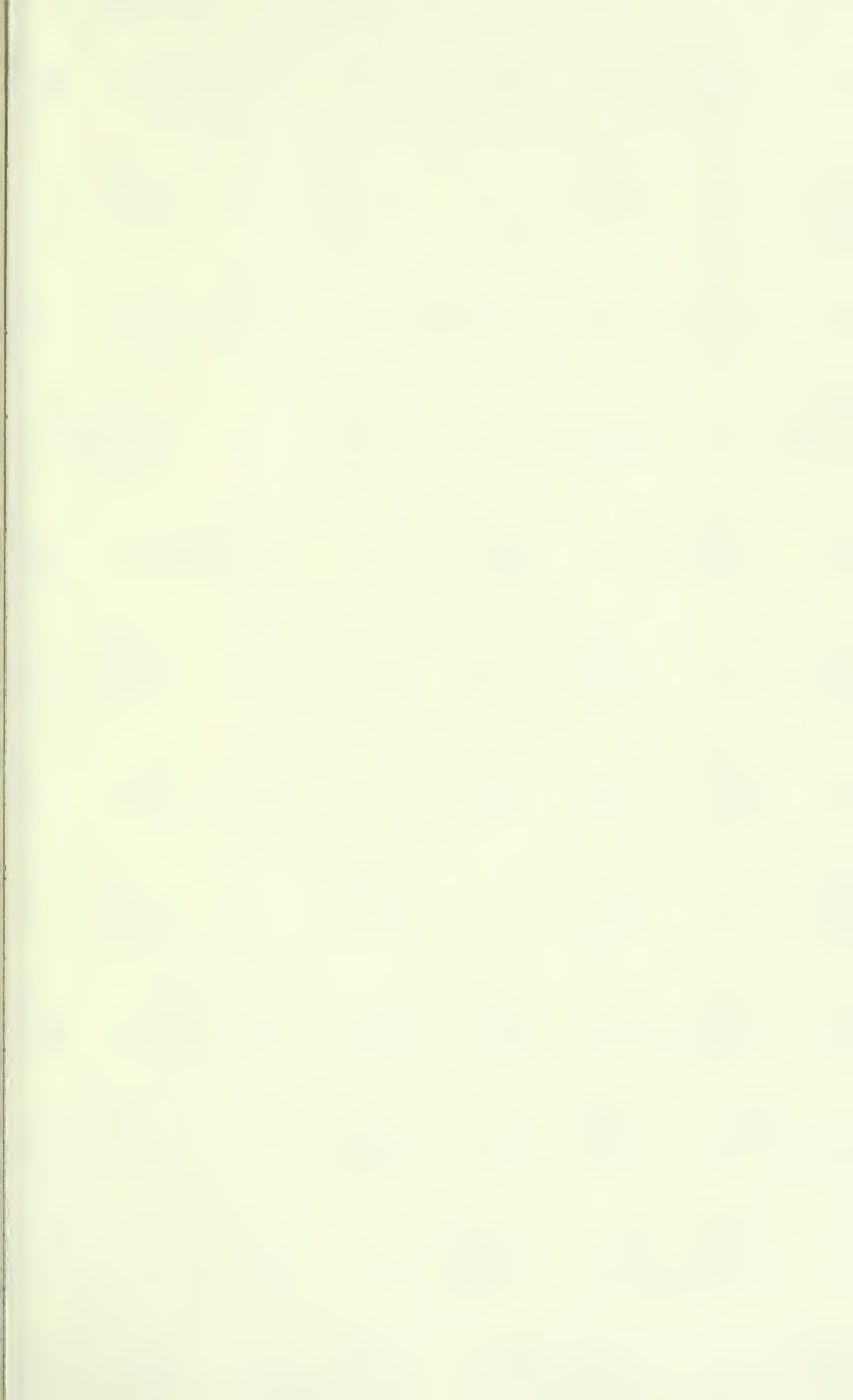
Nor is it necessary to dwell upon the extent to which the home administration was responsible for the general mismanagement of the war, in its main features, and its minute details, nor the thoroughly English stolidity with which all complaints were received by every member of the Government, from the cabinet minister who dictated pompous and unmeaning despatches, down to the meanest official who measured red tape, nor the intense and universal popular indignation which, after a year "full of horrors," compelled the resignation of the Aberdeen Ministry. Lord Derby did not, perhaps, overstate the verdict of the nation, when he said in the House of Lords: "From the very first to the very last, there has been apparent in the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government a want of previous preparation, a total want of prescience; and they have appeared to live from day to day providing for each successive exigency *after it arose, and not before it arose*. Too late have been the fatal words applicable to the whole conduct of Her Majesty's Government in the course of the war." The change in the ministry, however, by no means cured all the evils which had existed; for, although the sufferings of the soldiers—thanks in large part to the providential appearance and heroic conduct of Florence Nightingale—were greatly diminished, still, as we have seen, the military blunders continued to the close of the war.

Now, if we do not greatly mistake, the lesson which this country should learn from the mortifying experience of the English army in the Crimea is not one of exultation over its lamentable and unnecessary errors, but rather of indifference to the insulting criticism of a nation which can so ill afford to be critical, and of determination to profit in every possible way by those blunders which might have been avoided. The his-

tory of all wars, moreover, should teach us that now and then there comes a time when to hold the olive-branch in one hand and the sword in the other, especially if the olive-branch is kept in the foreground and the sword in the background, involves not only a sad waste of energy, but is mistaken kindness to our enemies.

Use every weapon which the God of Battles has placed in our hands. Put forth all the power of the nation. Encourage and promote all fighting generals; cashier all officers who are determined to make war on peace principles; arm, equip, and discipline negroes, not to burn, plunder, and massacre, but to meet their and our enemies in fair and open fight.* Demonstrate to the world that we are terribly in earnest. Waste no time in discussing the chance of foreign intervention. Postpone polygamy in Utah, African colonization, everything, to the engrossing and emergent crisis which now confronts the Government. Make the contest sharp, short and decisive. Put down the Rebellion, vindicate the majesty of the Law, the sacredness of the Union, and the integrity of the Constitution. There will be time enough, after this is done, to discuss all minor questions and all collateral issues. One paramount duty lies directly before us. Let us perform this duty fearlessly, and leave the future with God.

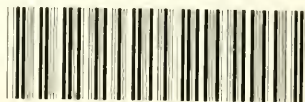
* The opposition to the employment of negro regiments, if made by traitors North or South, can be easily comprehended; if made by loyal men, is wholly inexplicable. Your neighbor's house takes fire at night. The flames, long smouldering, make rapid progress, and threaten the comfort, certainly, if not the lives of the household, and the total destruction of his property. The alarm is given. An engine comes promptly to the rescue. It is just in season to save his dwelling. The firemen spring with ready alacrity to their places. But stop! He suddenly discovers the appalling fact that they are negroes! True, there is not a moment to be lost. No other engine is, or can be, within helping distance. The least delay means poverty and a houseless family. And yet he rudely dismisses the dusky remen, folds his arm with Spartan stoicism, and, looking complacently on the burning building, says: "*Better this than to rely on the assistance of niggers!*" Is it Spartan stoicism? Is it not rather stark lunacy? And would you not take immediate measures to provide such a man with permanent quarters in a mad-house?







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 012 027 616 5

